

CHAPTER 5

The Heavenly Scene

The Book, The Seals, The Angels and The Lamb *Revelation 5:1-14*

The Book with Seven Seals

- 1. I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.**

Chapter five begins where chapter four left of. Remember, there are no chapter breaks in John's vision. He is still in the heavenly scene before the throne of God in amazement, as the four living creatures and the elder's shouts praise to God. In the mist of this John sees "the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals." Once again we see the number seven being mentioned. Thus far we have encountered the seven Spirits and the seven churches; now we are introduced to the seven seals.



- 2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"**

John now sees a "strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice" (the term "loud voice" is mentioned 20 times in this book). Remember what he first heard in chapter 4:1 "and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me" This angel is not like the creatures John had witness earlier (4:6). He specifically identified those beings as creatures and this particular being as an angel. This would mean that in John's eyes there are distinct

differences between the creatures that he saw in 4:6 and the angel now making a proclamation. The angel's announcement came in the form of a question. "Who is worthy to open the book and break its seals?" This question posed by the angel assumes that there are those who are not worthy; but on the other hand, there is one who is. This book can only be open if the seals are broken.

3. And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

The Greek word used here "book" is *biblion*, from which is derived the word "Bible." It was not a book like we presently know books to have binding and lines; but, rather a rolled up scroll or parchment. The breaking of the seal is not based on strength, but rather on the worthiness of the person seeking to break the seal. In ancient times when a king would send a letter or decree (in the form of a book), it would be sealed by placing a drop of hot wax on the front and the king would then use his signet ring to seal the message. The only one worthy to open the parcel would be the king himself or someone whom he would designate (the person he sent it to). It's the same in this case. The only one with authority to open the book or state who is worthy to open the book is the one sitting on the throne (the king).

4. Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; 5. and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

It states here that John literally kept on shedding many tears. All because there was no one found to open the book. Why was this so important to John? Why was he crying with such fervor? It was at this point that John was introduced to the Lion from the tribe of Judah. One of the elders' said to him, "stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

Notice, there was one found worthy to open the book; but He possessed certain characteristics. First, He was a lion, which signified strength. Second, He was from the tribe of Judah, which signified Abrahamic promise. Third, He was the root of David; and fourth, who has overcome.

Isaiah 11:1-2, 10

1. Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

10. Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious.

Has overcome. This phrase was used in chapter 2-3 when Jesus was evaluating the seven churches. He was basically encouraging those churches; just as He overcame, He was challenging them to overcome.

Ephesus (2:7)

'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who **OVERCOMES**, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

Smyrna (2:11)

'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who **OVERCOMES** will not be hurt by the second death.'

Pergamum (2:17)

'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who **OVERCOMES**, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

Thyatira (2:26)

'He who **OVERCOMES**, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;

Sardis (3:5)

'He who **OVERCOMES** will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Philadelphia (3:12)

'He who **OVERCOMES**, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Laodicea (3:21)

'He who **OVERCOMES**, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

6. And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

Now we encounter a very revealing detail about the only one who was worthy to open this book. First, He is not sitting on the throne but standing. Second, He is standing as if slain. Third, He has seven horns and seven eyes. Now it clearly states that the seven horns and the seven eyes are the Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. Remember, chapter 1:4 mentions the seven Spirits before the throne; chapter 3:1 mentioned He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars; chapter 4:5 mentioned the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God (cf. Zech. 3:9; 4:10). Also take note, as stated previously about the number seven and how it is being used to signify completion. Horns were often used symbolically to refer to strength (1 Kings 22:11), and here it is being used to represent the strength and authority of the Lamb (Dan. 7:24; Rev. 13:1).

At first, the only one worthy is introduced as the “Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David” (v. 5). Though He was introduced as a Lion, He is visually seen as a Lamb who had been sacrificed (slain). The Lamb reference to His first coming and His death. The word “Lamb” is used 27 times in Revelation. The Lion refers to His second coming and His mighty victory and judgement over all the nations and the world. This is the only place in Revelation where Christ is called a “Lion.”

7. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The Lamb who was slain now takes the book out of the hand of He who sits on the throne. This was confirmation to the living creatures and the twenty four elders that the Lamb was the only one worthy to open the book. He was also the only one worthy to receive the book. When He took the book the living creatures and twenty four elders began to worship Him. Falling down as a sign of reverence (for one always bow before a king), they were each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which was the prayer of the saints. Here we learn something new about those who come before the throne of God. Apparently, the living creatures and the elders were presenting the prayer of the saints as though they were interceding for them. Note that the prayers are accompanied by a musical instrument. Could it be, that in heaven our prayers are accompanied by music before the throne of God?

9. And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10. “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Verse 9 opens with the singing of a new song. This was a song not sang before. The lyrics spoke of the Lamb and His worthiness to break the seals. It then spoke of His accomplishments; that Him being slain was to purchase, for God with His blood, people from every tribe, and tongue and nation. The song then states what the people who were purchase became because of the Lamb. That is, He made them to be a kingdom of priest to our God; and they will reign upon the earth. This song literally reveals the future of all who were purchase by the Lamb. They will all live in a kingdom and will all be priest and will reign upon the earth. This is speaking of power and authority that will be given to those purchase by the blood of the Lamb.

11. Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

The living creatures and the elders are now joined by a countless number of angels. Every being in heaven are now proclaiming with a loud voice praises to the Lamb. Every time there is

mention of praise in this book it is always loud. There is no soft praise, or inner voice in heaven. For all praise is boisterous.

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."14, And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

The entire earth now takes notice of the Lamb and begins to worship. This is not only speaking of people, but also the animals, sea creatures and the like. Even the elements, the sea and everything in them, the earth and everything under it. As the entire earth give praise to the only one worthy to open the book, the living creatures praise with "Amen" and the elders continue in worship on their faces.